

Neighborhood Plan Summary

The summary of the Neighborhood Plan on Page 10 in the Background Materials does not accurately portray the Plan document. The TOP Seven Projects work together to improve and develop the neighborhood and should be presented together not separated into categories since they are very integrated and related. The finding that more than sufficient shelter and low-income housing is already provided in Pioneer Square needs to be included. The introduction of new market rate housing will help create a balance acknowledging that the current significant stock of shelter and very low income housing is significant and far greater than any other neighborhood in the City.

Abundance of social services, shelters and very low income housing

Pioneer Square bears a disproportionate share of social services compared to other neighborhoods and most parts of the City. Its share of the Cities shelter and very low income housing as a percentage of its housing stock and population needs to be noted. The City has not taken any significant actions to encourage or facilitate the distribution of this existing concentration out of Pioneer Square. The City should acknowledge and assume an obligation to facilitate dispersion of these services into other neighborhoods. This must be an active role by the City. Significant public funds have been devoted to preserving, developing and improving very low income housing in Pioneer Square including the St. Charles Hotel (65 units), the Compass Center (78 transitional units, 23 units) Lyon Building (64 units), Morrison Hotel (205 shelter beds, 190 units), Frye Hotel (234 units) and Union Hotel (52 units). Additionally the Lazarus Day Center, Bread of Life Mission, Downtown Emergency Service Center, Union Gospel Mission and Compass Center have both shelter and social services at their facilities. Public facilities also provide additional shelter space under severe conditions. Pioneer Square has more than its fair share. How can public and private entities fund and facilitate programs that will actively support increased dispersion of these needed services and housing into the larger City? What is the current count of shelter and low-income housing units in Pioneer Square?

Scarcity of market rate housing

Few units of market rate housing have been developed in Pioneer Square. Some units developed as rental housing have been converted to condominium ownership (80 South Jackson and Our Home Hotel). Condominiums include Post Alley, Olympic Block, Merrill Project, the Lofts and the Florentine. Market rate rentals are in the Nord, Seattle Quilt, Seattle Rubber Stamp and a few other very small projects. Additionally, Samis has developed market rate units in the Corona and Northern (Terry Denny) buildings. The Alaska Building is being studied for conversion to housing and the Lowman building is undergoing such a conversion. The reality is that there are very few market rate units for ownership

or rent in Pioneer Square. How many market rate units are currently in Pioneer Square?

Commitment to Artists

Many artists were displaced by development including the Polson Building fire. No matter the level of income, Pioneer Square wants to maintain and create housing for this population. The Toshiro-Kaplan Artists Lofts (50 units) and the Harbor lights (11 units) projects are the only replacement for hundreds of artist working and living spaces lost in Pioneer Square. How can new housing be created to serve this population?

Retail changes

You can still find the owner greeting you at Magic Mouse or many of the other businesses owned and operated in Pioneer Square. But development has changed some of the businesses ownership to more franchise and corporate outlet models. To what extent does the local owner improve the connections for housing development? How can the City support the development and operation of these "owner occupied" businesses?

Pioneer Square has "tight" sites

The few missing teeth on First Avenue are very tight sites. The Star Building site next to Mutual Life and the single lot next the Matilda Building (Bread of Life Mission) are both relatively small surface parking lots. Developing these sites and those elsewhere in the district will require the use of public space. Recent new fees have made that a difficult and very expensive prospect for development. The City should examine and reduce (or eliminate) these fees to help facilitate redevelopment on the parking lots and other tight sites. As an example, Historic Seattle worked with the City to develop a project budget for street fees on the Cadillac Hotel. The original \$20,000 budget (\$0.89 per square foot of building) has now bloomed to over \$46,000 (\$2.04 per square foot) and it is still not over. We could not have preserved the building without using the public ways, what is the public benefit to Pioneer Square in setting this fee structure? Should the City exempt reasonable approved street use plans for building rehabilitation? New Construction? Housing development? Should other fees at City Light or the Water Department reflect a City policy of supporting development in Pioneer Square?

Traffic and parking impacts

The Stadium and Ferry traffic/parking impacts are significant in the Square. Like poor customer service, the traffic impacts that many of us have suffered in and around Pioneer Square have left a strong impression that there is limited parking availability and that the stadiums/event center create significant impacts and are not predictable. Predictable parking and traffic conditions are needed to promote development in Pioneer Square. Portland developed public parking

garages (Morrison east and west) to provide a pool of low cost short-term parking. Such parking needs to always be available to support commercial and housing development without the impact of "event" parking use.

Public land

Land in public ownership is a valuable asset to the future of Pioneer Square. King County made the Toshiro Kaplan buildings available to develop 50 units of low-income artist housing. The City of Seattle has sold the Alaska Building, was market rate housing the preferred use? Did the sale price promote the development of new market rate or work force housing? The North Lot is another opportunity for significant housing development in Pioneer Square and has sufficient size to facilitate a grocery store that is a long dreamed of Pioneer Square residents. Will King County help facilitate the use of the North Lot to meet these community goals? Or the Johnson building? What about the Port of Seattle properties near Pioneer Square? Will the Port or public stadium ownerships oppose or encourage housing development on adjacent private lands?

Good Design

Current review of new construction and exterior alterations in Pioneer Square require approval. Some claim that these regulations are too exacting and difficult to meet. The assumption that reducing or removing the Pioneer Square Preservation Board review of design features will increase development or reduce the cost of housing is not correct. Good design of new construction has happened, examine the King Street Center or the Olympic Block project, both are new construction in the district and received approval. The guidelines are reasonable. Staff and the Board help with successful new design by offering simple and significant guidance. Because the guidelines are relatively simple and I have included them here:

New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials, and inherent historic character of the District. Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

The following architectural elements are typical throughout the District and will be used by the Board in the evaluation of requests for design approval:

A. Site. The property line is the line of the building mass. Street facades are uniformly located at the front property lines, thus there is a strong street edge definition. Building cornices, bay windows and ornament project beyond the main wall surface of some facades.

B. Design. Building design is generally typified by horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels. Facades may also be divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays. Street facades are also distinguished by heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement.

C. Building materials. The most common facing materials are brick masonry and cut or rusticated sandstone, with limited use of terra cotta and tile. Wooden window sash, ornamental sheet metal, carved stone and wooden or cast iron storefronts are also typically used throughout the

District. Synthetic stucco siding materials are generally not permitted.

D. Color. Building facades are primarily composed of varied tones of red brick masonry or gray sandstone. Unfinished brick, stone, or concrete masonry unit surfaces may not be painted. Painted color is typically applied to wooden window sash, sheet metal ornament and wooden or cast iron storefronts. Paint colors shall be appropriate to ensure compatibility within the District.

E. Building Base. Buildings are allowed a base of approximately 18-24 inches. Base materials should be concrete, sandstone, or granite, and may be poured, cut to fit or unit-paved. The color relationship between the sidewalk and building must be considered. Brick or tile materials should not be used except when existing walks are of the same material.

F. Additions. Additional stories to existing buildings are discouraged unless they were original to the structure.

G. Street Paving. Streets within the District are to be paved according to standard Engineering Department practices with a weaving coat of asphalt concrete.

H. Curbs. Where granite curbing presently exists, it will be the required replacement material. In other instances the same concrete and lampblack mixture used for the sidewalk will be used.

Non contributing buildings

I agree that a few buildings have been compromised by the loss of upper stories and insensitive alterations. New development requires predictability and surety regarding these structures. What should happen with buildings that have lost their integrity? Some buildings have returned stories and added penthouses. Are these good ways to increase housing opportunity? Are there sites where demolition is the right answer? If so, which sites?

New Construction Height

Pioneer Square is very important nationally as a district with a significant number of buildings from its limited development periods. Most of them are of (or originally were) up to 100 feet in height, with the notable exception of the Smith Tower. Great design could have additional height but mediocre design should not stick out and be a "large" blight on the future of the Square. We can all think of mediocre (or worse) buildings that now occupy important visual sites in Seattle. Any increase over the existing height must require great design and yet be compatible with the design character of Pioneer Square. Great examples of modern structures in historic areas of Europe often have very strong design relations to the historic buildings. Height, design rhythm, proportions and surface articulation are often present and contribute to the feeling that they "fit" with the historic structures nearby. Simply put, great design is great design. I would like new buildings in Pioneer Square to be the Landmarks of tomorrow and considered outstanding examples of good design. Something less may fill a place but does not really add to the character of the area.

Review Boards

I don't think the Review Boards are the problem. Inconsistent application of the guidelines and lack of predictability in the process must always be minimized and are subject to improvement. What would improve the review process?

Eliminating it will not create the opportunity for great buildings. In fact, the long history of preserving the character of Pioneer Square, building by building, is a valuable gift that is now presented to the developers of vacant sites and non-contributing buildings. The past sweat and investment of many others, now provide the character that enhances future opportunity and value.

Stadium neighborhood examples from other cities

In the San Diego example: How were the social services (described as concentrated) that existed prior to the stadium development "reduced?"

In the San Francisco example: The mix of housing in the area was described as 1,700 low to moderate units out of 6,000 total units. How was the balance of 7 market rate to 3 low to moderate income housing units achieved. What would the right ratio be in Pioneer Square? How would this be achieved?

In the Denver example: How was existing and significant new housing construction reconciled to the adjacent operations of the Stadium?

Vision

Pioneer Square has suffered from an uncertain future. The uncertainty of how a realistic balance of civil behavior, new housing, artist character and other important values has not fueled the new housing development needed in Pioneer Square. Can the uncertainty of the past be replaced with a predictable vision of the future?

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